



February 5th 2021

Captain Sir Tom Moore

I am sure many of you would have clapped on Wednesday evening to thank Captain Sir Tom and our amazing NHS. He had a remarkable life and captured the heart and feelings of our nation during this difficult time. As we all know, Captain Sir Tom managed to complete 100 laps of walking up and down his garden to raise more than £30million for the NHS. As another tribute, perhaps our children might like to do this or 100 laps of their street with you?

Captain Sir Tom and others like him have shown amazing qualities and acts of kindness during the pandemic and they can be very proud of their actions. On a local level, I am grateful to parents who have donated laptops to help children in our school, children who have donated musical instruments and others who help to litter pick around town and the fabulous work of the voluntary organisations who have helped support families in our community.

Following on from this, I wonder if we can get '**100 acts of kindness from Montalbo**' ? We have over 200 children on roll so this should be easily achievable. These acts could be anything such writing a nice card to a friend to say they are thinking about them or helping around the house. Please email me at montalbo@durhamlearning.net and I will share the total and examples of kindness each week.

Numbers in School

As time moves on, it is understandable that parents become anxious about the amount of time children are not in school. We are confident that once children return we can close any gaps, as children did during the autumn term after the much longer previous lockdown. We also understand that sometimes things change and this week we have had a number of additional requests for places in school which is making things more difficult to manage. We have based our risk assessments on a certain number of children in each class, and we are at that limit in several classes. **Please remember, if you are at home then your children should be, even if you are working at home.** That is the overarching government message. Although the situation is said to be improving, the less contacts people make at this time, the better. I know from talking to other heads locally we have considerably more children and staff in school than elsewhere.

Children's Mental Health Week

This week is Children's Mental Health Week and supporting mental health and wellbeing is one of the major areas we are keen to develop over the coming months and years. One of the strands of our approach is progressing through the Wellbeing Award for School (WAS). In December, Mrs Bartoli worked with an adviser from WAS and has created an action plan to support us. Mrs Bartoli will share more information about how this is progressing in the weeks ahead. I hope that you are enjoying her weekly Wellbeing Assemblies.

Co-Op Community Funding

I have been delighted to note the funding FOMS are achieving through the Co-Op Community Fund. Earlier this week, the total reached more than £300! We have been chosen as one of the causes to support for the year until October so there is still plenty of time to support the school by using your Co-Op Membership Card and by allocating Friends of Montalbo School as your chosen cause. More information can be found [here](#). Thank you.

Screen time

This period has meant an increase in children using devices. Remember to encourage your child to have a break from screens when they are not learning, which I know from my own children, is easier said than done!

COVID 19 reminders

The Local Authority have produced some information that they would us to share with parents via the links below.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/24952/How-to-prevent-the-spread-of-Covid-19-if-your-child-is-at-school>

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/24953/Self-isolating-for-schools>

It is important that we stick to national guidance and children should not be having sleepovers, for example.

Creative Children

Once again, this week I have been amazed by some of the work submitted and the ways families are managing through this period. Children in Reception have been learning about Chinese New Year and I was very pleased to learn that Amelia had been making some of her own Chinese food! Several families have been out walking including Ollie who managed 5 miles without complaining and Caoimhe who spotted rabbit footprints in the snow!

The Year 2 children have been learning about Arctic animals and Daniel J created a superb picture of a narwhal! I also know there was some partying in Year 2 this week and hope you all had a great time.

In Year 5 James did an experiment to show the effects of different substances on teeth using eggs and Declan did an experiment with a carrot to show the effect of greenhouse gasses on the world.

Well done to you all!

Violins

I received a lovely email from Seren in Miss Richardson's class. Seren is a very keen and talented musician. She has kindly offered to donate two violins to anyone who would like to play and enjoy them.

One of them is an electric blue 1/2 size violin and the other is traditional brown wood would 1/2 size. They both come in cases and have got bows. The blue one is in excellent condition and it has hardly been used. The wooden violin has got a few chips on (simply from usage) but is otherwise fine. Please contact school if you would like one.

Children entitled to Free School Meals

Today we sent out information to families entitled to means tested Free School Meals for the February Half Term period. It is a different system from the one in term time. We have sent the information out this week so that if parents have difficulty accessing this they can contact school next week. Please email montalbo@durhamlearning.net with any queries around this.

Weather

If forecasts are accurate, we are set for another spell of heavy snow. On days where we do have a lot of snow, it is likely we may not be able to provide wraparound care as the way we are operating at this time requires a lot of staff.

TCR Hub

TCR Hub continues to provide some exciting activities during lockdown. There are cookery courses, online crafts and lots of wildlife activities happening this week and over half term. For more information please visit. <https://www.tcrhub.co.uk/whats-on/>

Dates for the diary

January 5th – February 12th School closed to all but children of critical workers and vulnerable children
February 15th -February 19th Half term
February 22nd – March 5th School closed to all but children of critical workers and vulnerable children

Mr C Minikin, Head Teacher